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A
HISTORICAL SKETCH
OF
ROCKY RIVER CHURCH

FROM 1775 TO 1875

BY

REV. JOS. B. MACK, D. D.

TO WHICH IS APPENDED

A FOREWORD AND AN AFTERWORD

BY

MORRISON CALDWELL, ESQ.

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THE FLOWERS COLLECTION

DEDICATION

To the Godly men who for more than a century and a half have served as Elders of Rocky River Church, and by their daily walk and conversation, have been living epistles known and read of all men, these pages are dedicated, in the hope that this record may inspire the present and future generations to emulate the high standard of Christian citizenship herein set forth.

MORRISON CALDWELL



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CHAPTER I.

THE ROCKY RIVER PIONEERS.

The first settlers at Rocky River were sturdy Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. Rev. Thomas Craighead, a friend of Cotton Mather, of New England, induced thousands of his countrymen and religious sympathizers from the North of Ireland to come to Pennsylvania. His son, Rev. Alexander Craighead, the first pastor of Rocky River, brought hundreds of his friends to the fertile lands in Carolina and a large number of them selected lands within 7 miles of the present church, and on the hill on the South bank of Rocky River between the mouth of Coddle creek, and the mouth of Back creek, these pioneers erected in 1755 a log church in which Rev. Alexander Craighead preached. This was the first Presbyterian church West of the Yadkin river. Out of this original congregation rapidly grew the seven churches whose members made the memorable Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence on May 20, 1775. From old records and tombstones we know that among these pioneers were the heads of the following families, viz: Alexander, Anderson, Archibald, Andrews, Bradshaw, Burns, Black, Caldwell, Cochran, Campbell, Carothers, Davis, Farr (Pharr), Harris, King, Kirkpatrick, Morrison, McKinley, McCurdy, McLellan, Rodgers, Russell, Stafford, Scott, Spears, Shelby, White, Query and many others.

When John Rodgers, the first settler in 1732 located his cabin on the North bank of Rocky river, a half mile below the mouth of Back Creek, his nearest neighbor was 12 miles North on Third creek. A year or two later came White and Harris. The tradition is that one day White

heard some one chopping in the forest on the South side of Rocky River near the mouth of Back creek. He made his way through the cane brake and crossed over and found that his friend Harris, whom he had known in Pennsylvania, was his neighbor. The next day they met and cut out the road and made a foard across the river between the mouth of Coddle creek and the mouth of Back creek. This foard led to the location of the first church at this point.

Robert Kirkpatrick, a native of Rocky River, who was born in 1788 and wrote in 1854 a sketch of the church, says of these pioneers:

"They were strict in their morals, ardent in their religion and uncompromising enemies of kings and despots. Their forefathers had drank the bitter cup of oppression in Europe and they sought freedom from oppression in the wilds of America. There they found that freedom and they were determined to maintain it even at the expense of their lives." The same writer in proof of his assertion cites the fact that nine Rocky River young men in 1771 destroyed the king's powder near Concord, and that the pastor of this church and other members were leaders in the adoption of the Mecklenburg Declaration.

As to the religious life of these pioneers, Kirkpatrick says:

"The people of Rocky River were remarkably plain in their manners and dress, and strict in their observance of their Christian duties, such as rearing a family altar, teaching their children to read and study the Bible, which was a class-book in their school. They were strict observers of the Lord's Day, Calvinistic in their views of doctrine, regular attendance upon the sanctuary.

Whenever they built a church, they built a school house and made fine English scholars of their sons, as far as these branches were taught, such as reading, writing and arithmetic, but their daughters were much neglected. The girls were taught to read, some few to write, but very few were taught arithmetic." They were, indeed, the Puritans of the South!

CHAPTER II.

ROCKY RIVER AND HER PASTORS.

"And there were giants in those days, even the sons of Anak." The pastors of Rocky River have ever been leaders of men. The first pastor, Rev. Alexander Craighead, by his powerful personality and bold defiance of the tyranny of earthly rulers who sought to interfere with the rights of the people was without doubt the inspiring cause that led the Presbyterians of the seven churches to proclaim their Independence at Charlotte on May 20th, 1775.

It is also a noteworthy fact that the second pastor of Rocky River, Rev. Hezekiah J. Balch, was the real author of that declaration and that Ephraim Brevard whom history has credited with the authorship merely copied the draft written by Balch. The proof of this statement has been published by Rev. J. B. Mack, D.D., and also by Rev. Albert Franklin White, D.D.

The third pastor of Rocky River, Rev. Robert Archibald, like his predecessor came from Princeton and was a distinguished scholar. He was able to read and teach seven languages. His usefulness and influence as a teacher was very great. Among his pupils was the famous patriot and divine, Rev. Humphrey Hunter.

Rev. Alexander Caldwell, the fourth pastor, was a grandson of Craighead. He was also a Princetonian and is described as possessed of a brilliant intellect, which was early eclipsed by mental derangement.

The next pastor, Rev. John McKamie Wilson, D.D., during the thirty years of his pastorate wrought a mighty work and his works, like his

name, did follow him. His school in 15 years turned out twenty-five Presbyterian ministers. Fifteen of these were Rocky River boys, and strange to say six of them were grandsons of Robert Morrison, the pioneer, great-great grandfather of the writer. Aside from Dr. Wilson's influence in leading the young men into the Gospel ministry his most remarkable influence was exerted to prevent litigation among his congregation. It is said that for 30 years no lawsuit went into court from Rocky River. This trend to the ministry continued, and it is somewhat remarkable that in all the history of Rocky River covering a period of 150 years only two of her sons have chosen the legal profession. By irony of fate the only Rocky River boy that became a lawyer prior to 1884, was Dr. Wilson's own son, the late Joseph H. Wilson, of Charlotte, who was the Nestor of the Bar. The other boy who had the temerity and misfortune to trample upon the tradition of the fathers and enter the law, was the author of this chapter, whom Fate hath long since shown the folly of his choice. Let future sons beware!

A remarkable man was Rev. Daniel Lindley, the next pastor of Rocky River. In the less than three years of his pastorate he accomplished what might well have been claimed as a life's work. Coming among the people of Rocky River a young man, a stranger and without experience, he won the entire body of the people by his personal magnetism. He organized the first real Sunday school which has been kept up till the present time. He added to the membership of the church 252 members, and most remarkable of all he organized a temperance society of 500 members, more than the church membership. To have induced 500

Scotch-Irishmen, whose fathers knew so well how to distill the stuff that cheers but doth not inebriate, proves Daniel Linley a great man. This done in 1832 when the sentiment among Christian people was strong against temperance societies, and when such work was in its infancy, entitles him to be called the great apostle of temperance.

It is singular to relate that this wonderful young man felt called of God to carry the Gospel to the forgotten people of the mountains of North Carolina. Concord Presbytery denied him that privilege, and he then offered his services as a missionary to South Africa. There he labored for forty years, and among other things baptized Oom Paul Kruger, the hero of South Africa who held England at bay for years in spite of great odds. When he returned and visited Rocky River the writer a boy of 13, smiled in the church for the first time when Dr. Lindley told of teaching the Africans how to put on a shirt, and related how they would persist in putting their feet through the arm holes. That a man with the ability to do what Lindley did in Rocky River should spend 40 years a missionary to the savages of Africa, proves the power of an idea, and the still greater power of an ideal. Truly God doth move in a mysterious way His wonders to perform! The writer has gazed upon many more renowned, but never has he looked upon one of God's creation with so royal and majestic a presence as Daniel Lindley.

Next came to Rocky River, Rev. Daniel A. Penick, who for 37 years was the leader of his people. Dr. Wilson has been noted for his physical endurance and for his remarkable activities in min-

ministering to his people in sickness, regardless of weather and distance. "Father Penick" was a man of strong mind and strong body and right nobly did he minister to this great congregation, extending over an area that extended six miles in every direction from the church. Under his ministry the church school was kept up till the Civil War. He was noted for his rigid discipline and for catechising his congregation. On the centennial anniversary of the church Mr. Penick suggested the erection of the present church building and at a cost of \$6,000 he accomplished this in 1860. He sleeps beneath the spot where the pulpit of the old church stood. About him are gathered the faithful followers of his ministry. They rest from their labors, but their works will live throughout eternity. This writer attended the last catechising held by "Father Penick." It was at the old log school house at Harrisburg. I recall even now his white beard and kindly smile as he coaxed me out of my timidity and got me to answering questions in the Shorter Catechism. But I was not more confused I think than my good uncle when he started out boldly on the fourth commandment and ended with the tenth. I also recall one of his last messages to his people. His text was: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures where moth and rust doth corrupt, but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where moth and rust doth not corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal." It was a wonder sermon. The man with the message was there. He seemed to stand in the very gates of Heaven and beg his friends to follow him to that "land of pure delight, where saints immortal dwell." That was the first really great sermon the writer ever

heard, but it was shortly followed by another by that illustrious son of Rocky River, Dr. Robert Hall Morrison, first President of Davidson College. Dr. Morrison preached the funeral or memorial sermon of Father Penick. His text was: "O death where is thy sting, O grave where is thy victory," etc. This sermon produced a profound impression and by request of the congregation was published in pamphlet form.

The next pastor was Rev. Joseph B. Mack, who came from Presbytery of Charleston. Mr. Mack at the time of his coming was full of youth and vigor and consecrated to his work. His wit and humor were a part of his every day religion, and but for his fervent prayers and eloquent sermons, it is doubtful whether he could have overcome the Puritan instincts of the older members of his congregation who had been reared in the sterner school where religion was a sort of straight-jacket affair, and levity was an unpardonable offence. But such was the magnetism and such the momentum of this man that he swept all before him. I can see him now as he came into the Sunday School and personally taught or led in the singing of the "new tunes," such as: "Around the throne of God in Heaven, thousands of children stand"; "There is a happy land," etc. Dr. Wilson and "Father Penick" were noted horseback riders, but certainly neither of them rode as did Dr. Mack. Sitting upon his beautiful black mare with the grace of a cavalry leader he galloped into the homes and into the hearts of his people. Under his leadership Rocky River reached the high tide of membership and of financial contributions. The brick manse was built and the pastor was paid a salary of \$1,500, just three times the

amount paid to Dr. Wilson. Nearly all the colored members had left, but the membership under the revival preaching of Mr. Mack was soon over 600. He established the practice of preaching each Sunday afternoon in the different "quarters" of the congregation. Out of this later grew the churches at Zion and Harrisburg. Although Dr. Mack remained in Rocky River only a few years, he ever took great interest in this historic church, where he always numbered his devoted friends by hundreds. Soon after leaving the congregation he returned and delivered a historical address giving the result of his research. A portion of this address is published in this pamphlet, but it is incomplete because Dr. Mack had memorandum notes and part of his address was *ex tempore*.

Rev. Jas. M. Wharey, D.D., succeeded Dr. Mack in 1876. An able and earnest preacher he quickly gained the love of his people, both old and young. During his ministry began that unfortunate exodus from country to town which has proven the ruin of so many grand country churches. On the farms of the people who moved away, negro tenants were left to till the soil. Despite these drawbacks Dr. Wharey continued to hold the church in good place among her sister churches, and it was with sincere sorrow that they parted with him. This ministry resulted in the following young men entering the ministry, viz: Rev. Floyd Alexander, Rev. Oswald White, Rev. J. M. Harris, Rev. R. C. Morrison. Under his leadership the classical school was restored and Messrs. Custer, Osborne and Dunn prepared the youth of the congregation for greater usefulness.

The next pastor was Rev. Jno. G. Anderson, a worthy successor to such a noble line of distinguished predecessors. If Dr. Wharey faced one problem, it is but truth to say that problems beset his successor, on every hand. It was folly to falter. With faith in God and a desire to help his fellow man, he met each crisis and solved each problem as he understood the right. That he failed to please all the people, was the fault of the time more than of the man. Let his critics who say that his energies and abilities should have been devoted entirely to preaching, not forget that in interesting himself in the troubles and problems of his people, he only did what Rev. Alexander Craighead and Rev. Hezekiah Balch did in pioneer days and what Dr. Wilson did in his day in taking cases out of the hands of the lawyers. Time, the great physician, has healed all wounds of that battle, and let us hope that on that other shore the old friends shall meet their pastor face to face, and there shall be joy that passeth all understanding.

Owing to limitations as to space and the fact that all the later pastors are well known to present generation it is deemed wise to close this sketch at this point.

CHAPTER III.

THE EARLY CHURCHES AND CEMETERIES OF ROCKY RIVER.

Churches.

The first church (built of logs) was erected about year 1754 and stood on the hill side on the South side of Rocky river about half way between the mouth of Coddle creek and the mouth of Back creek. The old graveyard may easily be identified by numerous graves marked with stones, but no written monuments are there, though the place should receive at least a marker from the hands of a grateful posterity.

Here Craighead preached and here the communion service was first used. Mrs. Jane White when very old told Dr. Mack of her recollections of scouring the pewter communion service for this first communion. As a matter of fact the first preaching services were held on the North side of the river between where Mr. Ed Erwin lives and Pharr's mill. In 1768 a new log church was built between mouth of Back creek and mouth of Reedy creek and one-half mile from where Back creek enters the river.

In 1807 a frame church building, 40x65 feet, was erected where the grave of Rev. Daniel A. Penick is located in the present graveyard. In 1808 the Synod of North Carolina was held in that building.

The present brick church was built in 1859 at a cost of \$6,000.

Graveyards.

In addition to the old graveyard already described, we find that members of Rocky River congregation were buried at the Patton graveyard

on bank of Irish Buffalo, between Brown Mill and Cannon Mill, at the Phifer graveyard on old Salisbury road 4 miles West of Concord, N. C., at the Spears' graveyard 2 miles East of Rocky River church and at the old graveyard on East side of the present church and there were doubtless family burial grounds which are unknown.

We know that Benjamin Patton a signer of the Mecklenburg Declaration lies in an unmarked grave, now desecrated by the plow, within full view of the city of Concord. Here is something for the Daughters of the Revolution and the Presbyterians of Cabarrus county to think about.

On the summit of one of the highest hills in Cabarrus county, is the old rock-walled Spears' graveyard, so called because Wm. Spears donated the land. As you approach this sacred spot you are struck with the dense growth of trees within this enclosure. With proper attention and culling of the undergrowth, this could be made one of the most beautiful cemeteries in the State. Here are buried the following pioneers, viz: Capt. Archibald McCurdy, a Revolutionary soldier; James Morrison, Robert Morrison, Robert Caldwell, Robert Cochran, William Andrew, William Spears, James Bradshaw. Oliver Wiley, Thomas Davis, Isaac Ross, and many others whose graves are unmarked. Ex-Sheriff Wm. H. Archibald, son of Rev. Robert Archibald third pastor of Rocky River, is also buried here and his wife was the last person buried in this place. The oldest grave that is marked is that of Isaac Ross who died in 1760 and whose slate monument was erected in 1781. In this old graveyard we see on one monument sculptured the British coat of arms with its two

lions and unicorn. Not far away is the monument of William Spears and his monument made in Charleston has a huge American eagle with the motto of the United States, *E Pluribus Unum*. The poet and especially the near-poet will find the verses upon these old monuments well worth a visit to this spot. They breathe religion as truly as the trees springing from their graves suggest immortality. The old church graveyard has been cut off and is an unsightly spot, but here will be found many graves of more than passing interest.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HISTORY OF ROCKY RIVER.

Written by Rev. J. B. Mack, D.D.

It is a matter of great regret that no record whatever of the organization or early history of Rocky River church can be found. If there was any official register of officers or members, of baptisms, marriages or deaths, previous to August, 1835 it has been lost. Neither can we learn anything from the early records of Orange Presbytery, for they have been lost. Thus our sources of information can only be the traditions of the elders and contemporaneous history. The information gained from the first of these is somewhat unreliable, and that gained from the other is more or less indirect.

The precise date of the organization of Rocky River church cannot be known. This whole section was settled by Christian families, and the churches therein were gradually formed. It was first "The church in the house," then the gathering together of neighborhoods for worship, and then the worshipping of God in ecclesiastical organizations, which organizations divided or were merged into others according to the increase of population in various directions.

It seems, however, to be clear that Rocky River is the oldest Presbyterian church between the Yadkin and Catawba rivers. This is the testimony of tradition. Foote says, "Rocky River congregation is prior in point of time to Sugar Creek, and the first of all churches in Concord Presbytery." This was said when Mecklenburg Presbytery was a part of Concord Presbytery.

Sugar Creek, Poplar Tent and Philadelphia

churches were at first parts of Rocky River. Concerning Sugar Creek church Foote says, "The name of the oldest church in the upper country was Rocky River, and it included Sugar Creek in its bounds." Again in speaking of the Sugar Creek church building that was burned in 1886 he says: "This is the present place of worship of part of the oldest Presbyterian congregation in the upper country, in some measure the parent of the seven congregations that formed the convention in Charlotte in 1775."

Concerning Poplar Tent church, he says: "Prior to the time of Mr. Balch there were three elders of Rocky River church living in the bounds of Poplar Tent, who were continued as elders after the separate organization of Poplar Tent, of which they formed a part."

Concerning Philadelphia church, he says, that places on which two elders of Rocky River lived in 1775 are now in the bounds of Philadelphia.

It appears to have been the strongest and best organized church between 1753 and 1758. It is the first church in this section mentioned by name in the records of the Synod of New York—it was the first to obtain a pastor—and when the people in Cathey's settlement wished to call Hugh McAden in 1755 they expected that Rocky River church would take part of his time.

If compelled to fix the year when this church was organized and known as Rocky River, I would say 1755. It could not have been organized and known as such in the first half of 1753; because in October of that year the Synod of New York in an address to the General Assembly of the

Church of Scotland, said: "There are also large settlements lately planted in various parts, particularly in North and South Carolina, where multitudes are extremely desirous of the ministrations of the Gospel; but they are not yet formed into congregations, and regularly organized for want of ministers." Again, "The whole colony of North Carolina, where numerous congregations of Presbyterians are forming, and where there is not one Presbyterian minister settled."

It must have been before the Fall of 1755 for on the Records of the Synod of New York on Oct. 3rd, 1755 we find the name of the church just mentioned.

Thus between the Summer of 1753 and the Fall of 1755 the church was fully organized and named.. It was not organized by McMordie or Donaldson in 1753 for they were only licentiates and were sent out by the Synod of Philadelphia, while Rocky River was organized by some one belonging to the Synod of New York. This Synod did not appoint any of its ministers to visit North Carolina in 1753, but on Sept. 8th, 1754 they appointed Rev. Messrs. Charles Beatty and Daniel Thane to visit for three months each the destitute parts of Virginia and North Carolina. They performed this duty and I suppose that during the visit of one of these the church was organized. By which one of them we can not tell but as Rev. Daniel Thane is known to have gone as far as Fair Forest church during 1754 in Union county, South Carolina on his mission, I should be inclined to believe that he was the man.

The first settlements in this section were made about 1732. Between this and 1750 the emigra-

tion hitherward was steady but slow. The face of the country was then very different from what it is at present. A virgin forest adorned the hillsides, thick canebrakes covered the creek and river bottoms while tall grass grew on the level portions, presenting then the appearance of immense grazing farms where now thrifty forests wave. These immense ranges abounded with wild game which feeding on the grass and wild pea which grew in woods in summer and on the canes in winter kept fat during the whole year.

A writer about 1800 describing upper South Carolina says: "In 1750 when the settlement of the upper country began there were so many buffaloes which have since disappeared that three or four men with their dogs could kill from 10 to 20 in a day. Wild turkeys were also in the greatest plenty. Deer were so numerous that a rifleman with a little powder and shot could easily kill 4 or 5 in a day. A common hunter could kill in the autumnal seasons as many bears as would make from 2,000 to 3,000 weight of bear bacon. The waters abounded with beavers otters and muskrats. Twenty beavers have been caught by one man in one season on Fair Forest. The country was also overrun with wolves panthers and wild cats," etc. *Ramsey page 305*. There was a great facility of raising stock from the profusion of native grasses and canes. When the whole country was within the grasp of a few settlers the preference of one spot over another was generally decided by the comparative plenty of canes."

The ease with which a living could be gained in such a land while settling it when combined with the fertility of the soil and the salubrity of the climate naturally caused emigration unto it. The

peaceful character of the Catawba Indians added to its attractiveness. It is true that Virginia was a fine country but there was an established church, and the laws were comparatively severe on the subject of religion and as the settlers were Pennsylvania Scotch-Irish many of them passed through Virginia—yea many in Virginia left there and came with them.

The people who settled in Rocky River and indeed this whole section were Scotch-Irish. They were the descendants of the Scotch who emigrated to the North of Ireland during the reign of James I. These, while "retaining the characteristic traits of their native stock, borrowed some things from their neighbors, and were fashioned in some measure by the moulding influence of the climate and country." F., p. 90.

Of the Scotch-Irish there were two streams of emigration. Those who came direct from Ireland to Carolina, and those who first came to Pennsylvania and thence to the Carolinas. The difference between them seems to have been this, viz: Those from Pennsylvania had been in this country long enough to be judges of good land, and hence they settled along rivers and creeks the others, not being judges, settled on thinner lands and towards the heads of creeks and water courses. The settlers of Rocky River were of the first of these and some of them came from Lancaster county, Pennsylvania.

These were Presbyterians, of course, and seemed generally, to have been of the New Side party. That you may understand this let me say that in 1741 the Presbyterian Church was divided into two parts, called Old Side and New Side. The Old Side were opposed to revivals, discounte-

nanced the preaching of Whitefield, and disapproved of extempore preaching. The New Side gloried in revivals urged Christians to seek for assurance of hope and welcomed Whitefield.

Almost all if not all of the Rocky River settlers were of the New Side party as is evident from three things: First, the request for preaching from Rocky River were sent to the New Side Synod, i. e., The Synod of New York. Second, they invited McAden who was a New Side licentiate in 1755 to be their minister one-half of the time. Third their first pastor was Alexander Craighead who was one of the extreme New Side ministers. If Jno. Thomson preached at Poplar Tent there must have been some of the Old Side there which seems to be corroborated by McAden not remaining with them because of their divisions. Thus from the beginning this church was filled with those who believed in revivals, and God has blessed the church with them.

The first settlements were made about 1732, but until 1750 the population was sparse. Still, it steadily, though slowly, increased. Not only did they come direct from Pennsylvania, but on account of the comparative severity of laws upon the subject of religion in Virginia some of those settlers there came on too. About 1750 the stream of emigration began to increase, and in 1755 on account of the exposed condition of the Pennsylvania and Virginia frontiers consequent over Braddock's defeat there was a great influx of population. The effect of this is seen in the fact that the Sugar Creek settlement became large enough to form a separate congregation. Perhaps, the great drought of 1755 checked immigration somewhat, but only for a time, for in

1764 or 1765 the Poplar Tent settlement became large enough to form a separate congregation. It was on account of this great increase, that the Synod appointed in May 23, 1764 Elihu Spencer and Alexander McWhorter to go to North Carolina to "form societies, help them in adjusting their bounds, ordain elders, administer sealing ordinances, instruct the people in discipline, and finally direct them in their after conduct, particularly in what manner they shall proceed to obtain the stated ministry."

The idea that there was but very little preaching in this section before the coming of Alexander Craighead is utterly wrong. Had they been as destitute as is generally supposed they would not have hungered as they did for the preached Word.

We know from various sources that many ministers visited this region, that some of them came several times, and that sometime they stayed for weeks and even months. There are doubtless a number of Presbyterian churches in this State today that have less Presbyterian preaching than did your ancestors of that early day.

We know from the Records of the Synods of Philadelphia and New York that in 1753 (May 24th) McMordie was directed by the Synod of Philadelphia to start on July 1st, and Wm. Donaldston October and spend ten weeks each in the destitute settlements showing special regard to vacancies between the Yadkin and Catawba rivers. In 1754 Rev. Messrs. Tate and John Kinkead were directed to supply "the back country" for a time not exceeding three months; and the Synod of New York appointed Rev. Messrs. Chas. Beatty, Bostwick, Lewis and Thane to supply them

for three months each, though only Beatty and Thane did so.

In 1755 Synod of Philadelphia appointed Donaldson to preach three months in Fall, Wilson three months in Winter and Wm. McKennan three months next Spring. The Synod of New York appointed Rev. Messrs. Brainerd, Spencer and Clark to labor each six months in this section, and though they did not come Messrs. Hoge and McAden did. This is the year that Alexander Craighead came. Church wanted to call McAden.

In 1756 Synod of Philadelphia appointed Rev. John Alison to labor here in Fall and Winter, and the Synod of New York appointed six to spend four months each who did not come.

In 1757 Synod of Philadelphia appointed Rev. Alex Miller and Craig in the Fall and following Spring to preach in this section, and the Synod of New York appointed Mr. Hait to spend four months here and directed the Presbyteries of Newcastle and Hanover to send one each for the any one.

In 1751, Rev. John Thomson.

1752, Rev. John Brown, Licentiate.

1753, Licentiate Robert Mordie and Donaldson.

1754, Rev. Messrs. Jos. Tate, John Kinkead, David Thane and Charles Beatty.

1755, Donaldson, Rev. Matthew Wilson, John Hoge, Licentiate Hugh McAden and Rev. Alex Craighead.

1756, Rev. John Alison and Alex Craighead.

1757, Rev. Alex Miller and John Craig.

From the foregoing we learn that every year one or more missionaries visited this section, and

that others visited it in a non-official capacity. Hence we wonder that New Brunswick Presbytery was told that there were 14 congregations in North Carolina which rapidly increased under the emigration that took place then.

In January, 1758 the Presbytery of Hanover directed Rev. Alexander Craighead to visit Rocky River on 2nd Sabbath of February. In the following April, a regular call from this church for his services was presented and accepted. Rev. John Martin was appointed to install him; but he failed to do so. On July 18th, 1758, Rev. Wm. Richardson was ordained by Hanover Presbytery and directed to install Mr. Craighead, which duty he performed on the 27th of September, 1758, on his way to the Cherokees.

How long this pastoral relation continued we do not know, but it was probably only about two years, for on May 23rd, 1761, there is in the records of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia a petition from this church for supplies, which would not be the case if he was still the pastor. Perhaps, however, he continued to occasionally supply them until his death in March, 1766.

In 1768 the church was visited by the Rev. Hezekiah James Balch, who was ordained and installed pastor of Rocky River and Poplar Tent in the fall of 1769 and continued such until his death in 1776. In October, 1778 the Rev. Robert Archibald became pastor of Rocky River and Poplar Tent and continued so until about 1791. In 1793 the Rev. Alex. Caldwell became pastor and continued so until 1797.

CHAPTER V.

ELDERS OF ROCKY RIVER.

"The first Elders were Wm. White, Wm. Scott and Col. Robert Harris," so said Mrs. Jane White, who was born in 1754 (the year the church was organized) at her father's house, which was on the bluff of the river, just below Coddle Creek, about a quarter of a mile above the present Factory Ford.

The first named of these, Wm. White, was born in Pennsylvania and moved here in ——. Perhaps, because he was nearest to the church, he kept the communion service, which was of pewter, and which was brightened before communion seasons by rubbing it with scrub grass.

In a few years the church seems to have embraced within its bounds the territory now occupied by Poplar Tent and Philadelphia churches. Between 1760 and 1765, the following persons appear to have been Elders, viz: Wm. Scott and Archibald White (brother of Wm. White) who lived in the Northeastern part of the congregation. Robert Harris and David Caldwell, who lived in the Southeastern part of the congregation. Aaron Alexander and David Reese, who lived in the Poplar Tent section, and Adam Alexander and John Query, who lived in the Clear Creek or Philadelphia section.

In 1776 Poplar Tent was organized, and a few years afterwards Clear Creek, or, as it is now called, Philadelphia. This changed and the bounds of the congregation, which perhaps by Mr. Balch were divided into five sections, or "quarters" as they were and are called.

In 1780, the Elders seem to have been as follows:

James Morrison in Pioneer Mills Quarter; Col. Robert Harris in the Church Quarter; Francis Newell in the Black's Quarter; David Caldwell in the Query's Quarter, and William Scott in the Factory Quarter.

In 1788 Col. Robert Harris died and was succeeded in his quarter by Thomas Davis.

In 1795, the Elders were: 1, James Morrison; 2, Thomas Davis; 3, Francis Newell; 4, David Caldwell; 5, William Scott.

Between 1795 and 1801 James Morrison, David Caldwell and William Scott ceased to be Elders—perhaps they were all removed by the hand of death, as they all were very old, being among the first settlers in Rocky River.

The congregation also became enlarged, or the Factory quarter was divided; the lower part, or what is now Factory quarter forming the other.

In 1801 when Dr. Wilson took charge the Elders appear to have been: 1, William Morrison, Sr.; 2, Thomas Davis; 3, Francis Newell; 4, Wm. Morrison, Jr. (Miller, Wm.?) ; 5, Thomas White; 6, James Bradshaw, Sr.

In 1816, Wm. Morrison, Sr., was succeeded by John Morrison; in 18— James Burnes, who cut his throat, was succeeded by Wm. Roland Pharr, and in 1823 Wm. Morrison, Jr., was succeeded by James Query; so that all the Elders when Dr. Wilson took charge had passed away and given place to an entirely new Session.

About 1820 the Bradshaw quarter ceased to exist so that there remained only the original five, which division of the congregation has ever since remained the same.

When Dr. Wilson died and Mr. Lindley took

charge the following were the Elders: 1, John Morrison; 2, Andrew Davis; 3, John White; 4, James Query; 5 Wm. Roland Pharr or John Phifer.

During Mr. Lindley's pastorate John White was succeeded in the Eldership by David Miller, and Wm. Roland Pharr by John Phifer; so that in 1835 when Mr. Penick became pastor the Elders were: 1, John Morrison; 2, Andrew Davis; 3, David Miller; 4, James Query, and 5, John Phifer.

The Sessional Records have this minute, viz: "May 15th, 1836, Mr. David Miller informed the Session that owing to some dissatisfaction in the congregation, he doubted whether he was useful in the office which he held as some other man might be, and that he wished the congregation to say whether he might cease to act as Ruling Elder or not.

"Whereupon the Session ordered that a congregational meeting be held on next Wednesday at the church, and that publication be made of it today, (which was done) to ascertain whether Mr. Miller can be permitted to cease to act as Ruling Elder in this congregation; and that in case he is permitted, to elect another in his place."

"May 18th, 1836, the congregation met, as called by the Session; and having agreed by vote that Mr. Miller might cease to act as Ruling Elder in this congregation; proceeded to elect an Elder in his place: whereupon Mr. John M. Black was duly elected."

This is the minute detailing the circumstances of the election of the oldest elder now in the Session.

On May 1st, 1840, the Session "Resolved, That it be recommended to the congregation to elect five additional Elders, one for each quarter, and that it be done on Wednesday. On Monday, May 4th, 1840 the election was held, and John S. McClarty was chosen from Quarter No. 1, Walter F. Pharr from No. 2, Alexander McClarty from No. 3, Robert Caldwell from No. 4 and no choice in No. 5, though Joseph B. White received the largest number of votes. On the 20th of September, 1840, these four were ordained and installed; and on the 24th, E. B. Burnes was elected the additional Elder from Quarter No. 5. Whether he accepted or not the records do not state, but I presume that he did not, for in the minutes of March 8th, 1842, Col. David White is spoken of as an Elder, and he was from that quarter.

This, then, is the time when, and the manner in which the present system of having 10 Elders (2 from each quarter) went into operation.

John Morrison having died March 13th, 1846, James Query, March 11th, 1844, and John Phifer, October 18th, 1845, there were three vacancies in the Session, which were filled on July 4th, 1847 by ordaining and installing Robert H. Morrison from No. 1, Sandy McKindley from No. 4, and John Hampton White from No. 5.

Since then the following have been ordained: John Caldwell (chosen to succeed Andrew Davis) ordained Sept. 25th, 1853, and who ceased to act as such in 1865 or 1866.

McAmy A. White (son of John) ordained Sept. 25th, 1853, and who died in 1866. S. C. Kirkpatrick, John M. Query and Joseph O. Pharr were elected Elders on September 12th, 1857, and ordained Jan. 3rd, 1858.

On August 31st, 1866, A. Cicero Alexander was elected from No. 2 in place of John Caldwell, who wished to cease acting as Elder; James L. Morrison from No. 3 in place of McAmy A. White, dismissed.....church; Robert C. Caldwell from No. 4, and Dixon B. Penick from No. 5. They were ordained Nov. 25th, 1866.

On April 18th, 1869, Wm. S. White was ordained and installed an Elder from No. 5.

On Sept. 10th, 1869, John R. Wilson was elected from No. 4, in place of Robert C. Caldwell, who had removed to Concord, North Carolina, from the congregation; and was installed Oct. 24th, 1869, he having been previously ordained in church.

The Elders in 1871, when Mr. Mack became pastor were Robert H. Morrison and John S. McClarty from No. 1, A. C. Alexander from No. 2, John M. Black and James L. Morrison from No. 3; John M. Query and John R. Wilson from No. 4, Dixon B. Penick and W. S. White from No. 5.

In 1871, John S. McClarty and Dixon B. Penick having moved to other churches, and S. C. Kirkpatrick being dead, the Session was reduced to seven.

On May 3rd, 1872, J. C. Barnhardt was elected from No. 1, S. E. W. Pharr from No. 2, and James Query White from No. 5. Messrs. Barnhardt and Pharr having accepted were ordained and installed Sept. 15th, 1872.

James Query White having declined to accept, another election was held Aug. 2nd, 1873, which on the third ballot resulted in the election of Samuel Pharr, who was ordained and installed June 14th, 1874.

CHAPTER VI

DEACONS OF ROCKY RIVER.

The office of Deacon was unknown in this church before 186—. Previously the work of the Deacon was done by collectors appointed at the annual congregational meetings. This system working satisfactorily, it was with great difficulty the Rev. D. A. Penick induced them to abolish it, and to have in its stead the Scripture system of a Board of Deacons.

In 186— five deacons, one from each quarter, were elected: J. Dwight Morrison from No. 1, John M. W. Alexander from No. 2, Joseph Melanthor Black from No. 3, Elam M. Query from No. 4, and D. Henry White from No. 5.

In 1872 Session judged the size of No. 2 to be such as to require an additional Deacon, and M. L. Harris (previously a Deacon in Poplar Tent church) was elected May 3rd and installed in July.

In 1873 Session judged the number of families in No. 4 to be such as to require an additional Deacon. On the second ballot—Aug. 2nd, 1873—S. McKee Morrison from No. 5. He was ordained and installed June 14th, 1874.

In May, 1874, D. Henry White requested the Session to permit him to cease acting as Deacon in No. 5. The request was granted and R. Benton White was elected in his place April 30th, 1875.

On April 4th, 1875, J. Melanchton Black requested the Session to permit him to cease acting as Deacon in No. 3. The request was granted and Joseph R. White was elected in his place April 30th, 1875.

April 4th, 1875, session decided that No. 4 ought to have an additional Deacon, and on April 30th, 1875, R. L. Query was elected. These three were ordained and installed in June.

CHAPTER VII.

SABBATH SCHOOL.

Rev. D. A. Penick in his centennial sermon says that with your forefathers "The Westminster Shorter Catechism was the text book from the beginning in almost every family, studied every Sabbath evening and during the week recited in all the schools." The Bible was also a text book in the week day schools.

Dr. Wilson seems to have been the first to have Bible instruction at the church. In 1821 he had a Bible class at the church. In 1830 he organized Sabbath Schools in Quarters No. 1, 2, 3 and 5. What is now known as Query's Quarter being the only one not having a Sabbath School. These schools had from 40 to 80 scholars apiece and did much good. But in the spring of 1832 it was thought best, by the managers of the different schools to unite them all in one at the meeting house. Accordingly about the 18th of May, 1832 the Sabbath School of Rocky River congregation was organized." Joseph Flinn was the first superintendent and acted as such during 1832. But at the annual congregation meeting on Jan. 3rd, 1833, Samuel Morrison was elected superintendent, and was elected every year afterwards until he declined to serve any longer.

Then Elder J. M. Black was elected superintendent and remained so until Deacon J. Dwight Morrison was elected, who has been such ever since.

CHAPTER VIII.

REVIVALS.

This church has been greatly blessed in this respect, but the first revival of which we have any account was in 1798 when Rev. James Hall and Rev. Joseph D. Kilpatrick were sent by the Presbytery to hold a communion. About thirty were received into the church—one of whom, Samuel Morrison, died only about five years ago. In 1801 and 1802 the church was blessed (in common with all the other churches throughout this section) with another revival. A large number were received, of whom one, Miss Betsy Davis, died not quite six years ago. During Dr. Wilson's ministry there were no marked outpourings of the Holy Spirit but at various times there were large additions during the year to the membership of the church—as many as twenty or thirty. During the ministry of Rev. Daniel Lindley there was a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In less than three years two hundred and fifty-two persons were received into the church of whom about twenty-five were still members in 1874 when Mr. Lindley revisited Rocky River. During Rev. D. A. Penick's ministry there were a number of years in which quite a number were received into the church; but the years 1836, 1849, 1853, 1859 and 1866 were years in which there seems to have been a special work of grace. Of these, that in 1849 and 1853 were the most extensive.

“A protracted meeting was held in this church which commenced on Thursday 17th of August, 1849 and continued without interruption for eleven days and nights. Brother W. W. Pharr, C. Johnston, J. E. Morrison, S. C. Pharr and

Sheetz were in attendance. During the meeting thirty-two sermons were delivered and many exhortations. The presence of the Holy Spirit was manifest from the beginning of the meeting. As the meeting progressed both professors and sinners came in crowds to the inquiry room. In the following month ninety persons were received into the membership of the church, of whom eighty-eight were upon profession of faith.

In July, 1853 Rev. Daniel Baker held a protracted meeting for eight days, and in the following September eighty-nine persons were received into the church of whom eighty-eight were upon a confession of faith and twenty-four of whom were baptized.

In 1859 at the Fall communion thirty-six persons were received. Dr. R. H. Morrison and Rev. P. T. Penick assisting.

In the summer of 1866 the Rev. Robt. Nall, D. D., held a protracted meeting and in the Fall thirty-eight persons were received into the membership of the church.

During the ministry of the Rev. J. B. Mack there were three special works of grace. The first in the Fall of 1871, when he was assisted by the Rev. Wm. Banks, of South Carolina, and when sixty-three persons were received into the church.

The second was in the Spring of 1873 when he was assisted by his father, the Rev. Wm. Mack, D. D., and when there were thirty-two additions.

The third was in the Fall of 1874 during the visit of Rev. Daniel Lindley and when there were fifty-two additions, of whom fourteen were baptized.

CHAPTER IX.

AN AFTERWORD.

The foregoing chapters, IV to VIII inclusive, have been given just as Dr. Mack wrote them. It is believed that all of essential facts are absolutely correct. It would be interesting to carry this history down to the present date, but the cost will be increased and the committee is taking a risk in the publication down to 1875 as here given.

There is a mistake in local history that must be corrected. A monument has been erected in the center of the graveyard at Poplar Tent which sets forth that Rev. Hezekiah J. Balch died in 1776 and was buried there. Strange as it may seem this is an error. Rev. Hezekiah J. Balch instead of dying in 1776, simply moved to Tennessee in that year. Nine children were born to him after he left Rocky River and he died Jan. 12, 1821 in Sullivan county, Indiana, and was buried in Hopewell church graveyard in that State. It is Rev. James Balch, the father of Rev. Hezekiah J. Balch, who was buried in Poplar Tent graveyard. My authority for this is Dr. Mack's discovery in a Cincinnati library of a book written by Rev. A. F. White, LL.D., who was a grandson of Rev. Hezekiah J. Balch. This book gives names of all the children born after he left North Carolina. Foote declares that his widow had two children and married a McWhorter. His information was incorrect. An old record in Concord shows that McWhorter married Martha Balch between 1777 and 1787. Certainly this was not the wife of Rev. Hezekiah J. Balch nor the wife of Rev. Jas. Balch, but it is probable that she was his daughter, a sister of Rev. Hezekiah, because Dr. White's book says Rev. Jas. Balch had four

sons and four daughters, and the records show that Rev. Jas. Balch located here. Dr. White gives the names of three of the daughters and my theory is that the other was Martha, who married McWhorter. In those days removal to Tennessee meant removal from the world and it easily explains the tradition as to the death of Rev. Hezekiah J. Balch. It is not improbable that he found it prudent to go into the wilderness of the West, when the war came, in view of the part he had taken in shielding the "Black Boys" of his congregation and in bringing about the Declaration at Charlotte.

The following incidents cannot be omitted from this sketch:

1. The first settled places in Rocky River were John Rodgers' (already described), David Caldwell's on Reedy creek (near old Smiley Pharr place), James Alexander's (on Rocky River near old Samuel Pharr place), William White's (near old Neisler factory), and Robert Harris' (near church).

2. The first marriage in congregation was John Anderson (a famous hunter on Reedy creek). He married daughter of John Rodgers, the first settler.

3. The first burial was James Ross, who was drowned in river near mouth of Back creek. He is buried in the first graveyard nearby.

4. The first child born in Rocky River was Joseph Rodgers.

5. Rocky river was formerly known as Johnson's river, and Caldwell creek was called Beaver Dam creek.

Thus endeth this chronicle of the historic

church of Rocky River. Let us hope that the movement back to the country, may yet restore the grand old church to her former glory among her sister churches.

THE END.



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